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News From Yonkers City Council President Chuck Lesnick

September 19, 2008

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SFC Project Update: Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) Heads Into the Final Stretch

The Council has been working hard over the past few months to address thousands of questions surrounding the environmental impacts of the proposed SFC Project. The developer requested an ambitious timetable which included accepting the FEIS by the end of September and issuing our findings in early October. Unfortunately our tremendous efforts to meet these deadlines are being hampered by the developer who has provided insufficient information to some of our key inquiries.

If the Council proceeds to approve the FEIS without addressing these questions, the whole project could be delayed by the courts.

Please join all seven Councilmembers in demanding that the developer stop jeopardizing the project and begin cooperating with the Council by answering these final and important questions.

School Bus Idling Law in Effect



Attention all who breathe air, especially near schools:

As of August 21, all school districts must instruct their school bus drivers to turn off the engine of a school bus or other vehicle owned or leased by the school district while the bus or vehicle is parked or standing on school grounds or is in front of or adjacent to any school.

For more information,
contact the Yonkers Public Schools at 914-376-8000.

Assessment News



The Council's Intergovernmental Relations Committee met with Lee Kyriacou, executive director of the [NYS Office of Real Property Services \(ORPS\)](#), Tuesday night to brief the Council on the pros and cons of county-wide vs. city-wide reassessment.

The meeting, which was open to the public and will be aired on Channel 78 this week, was also attended by City Assessor Mark Russell and County Legislators Ken Jenkins and Gordon Burrows.

All agreed it's a problem that Yonkers property owners have been hit with unfair county taxes-- almost 24 percent while others had theirs dropped close to 6 percent-- due to the fact that we have not conducted a re-assessment since 1954.

The inequities are also at work within our city limits in that some homeowners may be paying too much while their neighbors may be paying too little.

Equity demands that we re-assess our property more frequently, something that the state encourages and offers incentives for doing. We are definitely looking into this.

In May, the Council voted unanimously for a county- wide reassessment of all property. Subsequently Councilwoman Joan Gronowski reintroduced her resolution that the City of Yonkers undertake reassessment independent of the county's action.

The county is currently engaged in a study of various aspects of reassessment which is expected to be completed in March, 2009.

The meeting primarily focused on whether we should wait for the results of the county study or move forward either on our own or with a few other Westchester municipalities.

We also discussed protections that senior citizens would continue to enjoy with the Enhanced Star Program to mitigate the damages of any changes in assessment. This is of upmost importance to the Council.

The Council had many questions for both OPRS and the City Assessor and will reconvene after they have had sufficient time to research our questions.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments by clicking on my email address

[here](#).

Avalon Bay Meeting

CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YONKERS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING SESSION UNDER THE STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT

APPLICANT NAME: AvalonBay Communities, Inc.

PROJECT LOCATION: 79 Austin Avenue, Yonkers, New York (Block 3285, Lot 210)

DATE OF PUBLIC SCOPING SESSION: October 14, 2008

AvalonBay Communities, Inc. (the "Applicant") has petitioned the City Council of the City of Yonkers for an amendment to the Zoning Map of the City to re-zone the property located at 79 Austin Avenue, also known as Block 3285, Lot 210 (the "Site"), from IP District to M (apartment houses, medium density) District. The Site is approximately 20.3 acres. If the requested amendment to the Zoning Map is adopted by the City Council and the Site is re-zoned to M District, the Applicant intends to develop the Site with an apartment house community having not more than 450 units.

Pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder, the City Council, as lead agency, has issued a Positive Declaration of Environmental Significance and has required the Applicant to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") to assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed development.

The City Council will conduct a public scoping session for the DEIS on Tuesday, October 14, 2008 at 8 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 40 South Broadway, Yonkers, New York 10701.

Click [here](#) for a copy of the Draft Scope.

Weigh In On The Waterfront



Residents are invited to attend a public workshop at 7 pm Wednesday, Sept. 24 at the Yonkers Riverfront Library to give their ideas on how to reinvigorate the

Yonkers waterfront as part of the city's Local [Waterfront](#) Revitalization Program (LWRP).

The state-sponsored program through LWRP has been commissioned to guide growth and development on the City's Hudson River Waterfront. The process includes incorporation of key policy initiatives that will support the future vision.

The workshops are part of a broad public input program designed by project consultant, peter j. smith & company, inc., of Buffalo, New York.

For more information, call Ron Cabriele, Deputy Director, City of Yonkers Downtown and Waterfront Development at (914) 377- 6278.

Tax Cap Meeting



Nassau County Executive Tom Suozzi spoke at our Westchester Municipal Officials Association business meeting in Ossining last night to talk about a proposed property tax cap. He called the cap a necessary "blunt instrument" because property taxes in New York are among the highest in the country and have been rising at double the rate of inflation since 2000.

His five percent cap proposal also includes a "circuit breaker" idea to limit taxes to a percentage of income. The proposal only applies to independent school districts, not dependent school districts like Yonkers and New York's other big 5 cities where the municipal and school district boundaries are coterminous and the municipality (with state aid) funds the school district.

To watch a video of his past presentations on tax caps, go to [Lo Hud TV](#).

Seven Days and Counting...



As of today, Governor Paterson has seven days to sign or veto the rehabilitation tax credit legislation which increases the credits and rebates available to property owners.

The legislation will enable the core of our communities, namely the downtowns and older neighborhoods, to reap economic stimulus which will ultimately generate increased tax revenue for those local municipalities as well as for the state.

The bill number, for administrative reference, is the former Senate Bill Number, S.5425. The correct language, however, can only be found in the Assembly version of the bill, A.30000. (The Executive Chamber is aware of this technicality.)

Given the nation's bleak economic forecast and the possibility of a second special legislative session prior to November's general election, supporters may have to really rally together to convince the Governor to sign the tax credit legislation.

To learn more, please read my editorial in the Journal News by clicking [here](#). I urge everyone in favor to please contact the Governor's office by clicking [here](#).

Farmer's Market



The St. John's Farmer's Market is enjoying a bountiful year here in Yonkers. Stop by with your green grocery bags to buy farm fresh produce and wonderful baked goods on Thursdays from 8 am to 4 pm through November.

Green Policy Jobs at City Hall



My office is currently seeking to fill the position of **Legislative Assistant/Policy Analyst**.

Responsibilities including but not limited to: review and research legislation that comes before the Council; research on new environmental policy initiatives and legislation; liaise with various community organizations and help develop policy to address issues and concerns; help coordinate work of the Green Policy Task Force (brief Council President on specific legislation and prepare background materials for committee meetings); serve as interim manager of data collection process for Carbon Footprint Calculation/ Carbon Reduction Plan Implementation; and attend and assist with a wide- variety of community events (environmental and other issues of interest).

Preferred requirements: BA/BS degree, preferably in Environmental and/or Political Science and preferably 1-3 years experience (MA may be substituted for 1 year of experience). Strong writing, research and organization skills. Experience in a political environment helpful. Computer skills with Word, Excel, and Access preferred. Must be available to work a couple of nights per week, occasionally on the weekend, and have own transportation. Salary commensurate with experience. Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest, resume, 3 varied writing samples to: Rachelle Richard, Chief of Staff, Office of the City Council President, 40 South Broadway, Room 403, Yonkers, NY 10701. No drop- ins please.

The City of Yonkers is seeking a **Manager of Environmental and Sustainable Development** for the review of development plans and proposals and recommending implementation of sustainable design elements. The work includes reviewing environmental impact statements, managing the City's Brownfield program and recommending programs to reduce the City's environmental impact and improve quality of life. The incumbent will manage the environmental review process, conduct field studies/surveys relating to development applications and associated environmental impact

statements, apply for grants to help improve environmental management, assist in the implementation of projects and policies, act as a department liaison to local environmental committees and recommend environmental policy. For more information, please contact Edna Colombos, Department of Human Resources, City Hall 40 South Broadway, Yonkers, NY 10701 Fax: 914-377-6897.

Sarah Lawrence College Installs Green Roof



SmartRoofs, a subsidiary of [Sustainable South Bronx](#) (SSBx), and [Sarah Lawrence College](#) (SLC) are co-hosting an event called, "Green Roofs, Green Jobs!" at 10 am on Saturday, Sept. 27 on the SLC campus in Bronxville.

The event will showcase SmartRoofs' first official green roof installation, followed by a press conference at 11:30am with heroes of the green-jobs movement and local elected officials. There will be locally-grown refreshments, tabling from Yonkers community organizations, music, tours of SLC's newly retrofitted Green Dorm, and a networking session.

SmartRoofs, a green roof installation company based in the Bronx, is guided by SSBx's mission to create environmental justice through innovative, economically sustainable projects that are informed by community needs.

The installation date coincides with the national day of action, "Green Jobs Now!" - calling for Green Collar Jobs as a way to

lift people out of poverty and restore our planet. By employing graduates of SSBx's Bronx Environmental Stewardship Training program (BEST) to install and maintain the green roofs they design, SmartRoofs will show this solution in action.

For more information about the day's events, or to reserve a table for your organization, please contact [Justin Butler](#) or call 860-573- 9564.

Yonkers Marathon This Sunday



The 2008 Yonkers Marathon will start at 8 am on Sunday, September 21 on River Street just in front of the Riverfront Library. It finishes on Nepperhan east of the post office.

This year marks the marathon's 83rd race as the second oldest in the country. The race route, which can always be run as a half marathon, is as follows:

Marathon/half marathon route - this is a loop and double loop course. Please note that South Broadway southbound will be coned off and closed to traffic from Prospect Street to Valentine Lane and one lane on Riverdale Avenue will be coned off and closed to traffic north bound from Valentine Lane to Main Street.

- start at River Street going south, street name changes to Buena Vista left onto Nepperhan and a left onto Warburton Avenue
- Warburton Avenue to Main Street in Hastings
- right (east) on Main Street to Broadway
- right (south) on Broadway to Tompkins Avenue
- left (east) on Tompkins to Nepperhan Avenue
- right (south) on Nepperhan Avenue to the driveway at city hall
- make a right up the main driveway
- bear left to the main plaza and over the foot bridge
- make a right down the main driveway to South Broadway
- left (south) on South Broadway to Valentine Lane
- right (west) on Valentine Lane to Riverdale Avenue
- right (north) on Riverdale Avenue to Main Street
- left (west) on Main Street right onto Buena Vista
- right onto Nepperhan up to Warburton and a left back out for the full marathon.

For more information, contact the Yonkers Parks and Recreation Department at 914- 377-6450.

Drip Drop, Drip Drop



This is the sound of your money going down the drain due to outdated water meter reading procedures taking place around the country as well as here in Yonkers.

The fix will cost Yonkers water consumers about \$18 million to overhaul the meter system over the next two years, but in the end it will correct billing inaccuracies, improve water delivery and billing services for consumers, and protect the environment through better water conservation.

If you have an opinion about the [impe nding project](#), please make your voice heard at a public meeting to be held at City Hall on the 4th floor at 8:00 pm on Sept. 23.

Film Series at Riverdale Y- Just South of Yonkers



The [Realabilities Film Festival](#) at the Riverdale Y Sept. 21-23 will showcase feature and documentary films depicting issues affecting people with disabilities.

Premiering the week before National Disability Awareness Month, Realabilities aims to promote awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories and artistic expressions of people with different disabilities.

Come see:

[Silent Games](#): Sunday, September 21 at 2 pm.

The captivating story of an Israeli national deaf soccer team set out to become the top eight contenders in the 2007 World Championship in Bulgaria. Followed by a discussion with a panel of Special Olympics athletes.

[Snowflake](#): Sunday, September 21 at 7 pm.

Alex Hughes, an ex-convict, is on a road trip to Winnipeg to see an old friend. Many things happen along the way in this award-winning film. Followed by discussion on Autism Spectrum Disorder featuring Jesse Mojica, who appeared on the Oprah Winfrey Show as well as the documentary film "Autism Every Day."

[BenX](#): Tuesday, September 23, 7:00 pm

Ben is different. His life is a universe to itself, where he plays his favorite online computer game Archlord avidly, trying hard to train himself for the real world he lives in. Followed by the presentation "Signs of Adolescent Suicide" led by Ellie Argilla, LMSW from Riverdale Mental Health Association.

Tickets: \$10 (group rates available.) You can purchase tickets [online](#) (with no service charge). For more information, contact [Sandy Mislow](#) at (718) 548-8200, ext. 230.

Save the Date

Please join me and My Sisters' Place this year for the commencement of Domestic Violence Awareness Month on Thursday, October 2, 2008, in Yonkers City Hall Plaza. The ceremony will begin promptly at 6:00 pm followed by a candlelight vigil.

Domestic Violence shows no bias. It affects people of all ethnic,



religious and social backgrounds. It is my goal to bring awareness to the community regarding this devastating issue. I strongly urge you to join us for our 2nd Annual Vigil and to participate in our campaign. The information that will be made available to you may one day save a life.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Carol Bengis in my office at 377-6065 or email her at Carol.Bengis@YonkersNY.gov.

Please spread the word and let's make this event even better! I look forward to seeing you on October 2nd.

Peace Out



The [Brahma Kumaris](#), in collaboration with the Office of Yonkers City Council President, warmly invite you to participate in the United Nations' International Day of Peace.

The day of peace is a global holiday when individuals, communities, nations and governments highlight efforts to end conflict and promote peace.

Established by U.N. resolution in 1982, "Peace Day" has grown to include millions of people around the world who participate in all kinds of events, large and small.

Join us, Monday, September 22, 2008 from 6 -7 pm for the Reception. 7:15pm for the program of inspirational messages of peace, meditation & prayer, music, song, and dance.

Meet at Yonkers City Hall, City Council Chambers (4th Floor), 40 South Broadway.

For more information: (914) 969-7910.

John Reid Golf Classic



It's time for the third annual John [Reid Annual Golf Classic](#) on Monday, Sept. 22.

FORMAT: Third Annual John Reid Championship
Best ball of foursome with full handicap (Must have verifiable USGA handicap index)

FORMAT: Four-Man Scramble Classic

TIME: 10:00 AM Registration/Brunch
11:30 AM Shot Gun
5:30 PM Cocktail Hour
6:30 PM Awards Dinner

EVENT SPEAKERS: Philip A. Amicone ~ Mayor, City of Yonkers
David Normoyle ~ Assistant Director, USGA Museum United States Golf Association

LOCATION: Saint Andrew's Golf Club 10 Old Jackson Avenue, Hastings-on- Hudson, NY

The event will benefit Yonkers Partners in Education (ypie), a non-profit organization striving to ensure that all children who attend the Yonkers Public Schools have access to a quality education that prepares them for high school graduation, college, work, and success in life.

For more information, contact Yonkers Office of Economic Development at (914) 377-6797 or email them at info@yonkersgolfinc.com

Yonkers School Gala Fundraiser



Join hands to benefit the school children of Yonkers by attending a fabulous fundraiser at 6:30 pm on Thursday, October 30th at Villa Barone Manor in the Bronx.

Enjoy cocktails and a silent auction followed by dinner and dancing.

The beneficiary, Yonkers Partners in Education (ypie), is a non-profit organization striving to give children attending Yonkers Public Schools access to quality educations in preparation for high school graduation, college, work, and success in life.

To purchase tickets, click [here](#) or call Ypie directly at 914-377-4882.

The Wild Wild East

The annual meeting of the Friends of [Philipse Manor Hall](#) is scheduled for 7 pm, Thursday, October 2 at the Hall, located at 29 Warburton Avenue (corner of Dock Street).

After a short business meeting and election of trustees by Friends members, there will be a lecture entitled "The Wild, Wild East" by Dr. Robert Spiegelman.



The event is free and open to the public. For more information, please call Philipse Manor Hall at 914- 965-4027 or email Joan Jennings at joanjenn@gmail.com

Know Your Rights Forum

All are invited to attend Senator Andrea Stewart- Cousins "Know Your Rights Forum," in conjunction



with NYS Crime Victims' Board.

The forum will be at 7 pm Wednesday, September 24 at the Yonkers Riverfront Library.

Should you have any questions, or need any additional information, call Andrea's office at 914-771- 4190 and speak with Janis or Mynah.

Read on...



Written by Laura Fahrenthold

email: chuck.lesnick@yonkersny.gov

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